

## **THE WORLD SOLAR COMMISSION MEETING**

HARARE, ZIMBABWE, 14 SEPTEMBER 96

I am sure many will share my sentiment when I, HARARE, ZIMBABWE, say how impressed I have been by the full commitment and able leadership of His Excellency President Mugabe as Chairman of the Solar Commission in taking the lead role in the preparation for and hosting of our meeting today and the World Solar Summit to follow.

2. The agenda before us will not only guide our deliberations but is also meant to chart our course of action as well as provide our future direction. As members of the Solar Commission, each and everyone of us play an important, if not crucial role in determining the success of our endeavour.

3. It is evident that the World Solar Summit process has covered a lot of ground over its three- year period. The high-quality documents included in our agenda for both this Commission meeting as well as the World Solar Summit bear testimony to this fact. The draft report from the Secretariat has also described the various events that have been organised and have taken place. Clearly no effort has been spared in paving the way towards the World Solar Summit. As a member of the World Solar Commission and leader of the Malaysian delegation, I would like to put on record our appreciation and support of the World Solar Programme.

4. At the same time, please allow me, Mr. Chairman to offer some suggestions for consideration of this meeting.

5. Firstly, I would like to touch on the issue of institutional arrangements. Let us not be too strictly governed by the need to put in place new, elaborate and highly structured institutional arrangements as a prerequisite to our solar programme. An obsession for such a practice, often observed as a U.N. mode, sometimes serves to distract us from what begins as a good and noble intention. Let us not lose our way because of the maze we have unwittingly created; let us not be overwhelmed by the bureaucratic infrastructure and hierarchy we impose on ourselves; let us not be impeded by processes, procedures and formalities of no direct relevance to our purpose. Rather, let us begin on a modest scale, involving smaller groupings and utilising institutional or networking arrangements already established and functioning.

6. Secondly, Mr. Chairman I would like to refer to the proposed World Solar Programme. I do realise that it conveys a consensus of several ideas carefully thought out and deliberated at length in several expert group forums and regional summits. I commend the effort taken to put it in the

form presented to us for consideration. Nevertheless, I would like to suggest that caution is applied in selecting only what is best, most appropriate and easily implementable at this early stage. Needs vary among countries and resources, particularly finance, are not always available. Thus, selectivity and pragmatism become important to ensure that success is seen and felt early in the day in order to spur us on to higher levels of achievement.

7. This brings me to third issue, that is, the question of funding. I have been advised that an earlier proposal for a World Solar Fund has been dropped. While the alternative mode of resorting to national resources is acceptable, not all countries are well-endowed. There are also countries where renewable sources of energy play a critical role in rural electrification. Let us then not avoid the need to discuss the issue of funding and the possible approaches that could be considered.

8. Lastly, Mr. Chairman, I have no doubt that convening the World Solar Summit and signing its Declaration will serve the purpose of getting a commitment from Heads of National Governments to the World Solar Programme. At the same time, I believe that the success in its implementation will finally rest in the hands of those responsible in each participating country.

9. I am one of those who strongly subscribe to the notion that 'actions speak louder than words'. I would, therefore, suggest that our approach to a World Solar Programme should be one that is essentially action-oriented.